

## **Exhibit 5; Theological Statement**

The Rev. Dr. Jeff Hood

## Theological Statement

In the Gospel of John (7:53-8:11), a group of religious leaders confronts Jesus with a woman who has been caught in the very act of adultery. The leaders demand that Jesus assent to the punishment of death that is prescribed by their law. In response, Jesus joins the woman in the dirt and advocates for her life. Though I am leaving out multiple details of the passage, its' core message is what describes my life and work. As a follower of Jesus, I believe that I am called to place my body with those who are experiencing oppression and advocate on their behalf.

In the Gospel of Matthew (25:31-46), Jesus declares that his judgment will be centered on the least of these (particularly mentioning those who are in prison in 36 & 43) by joining his very incarnational presence to their plight. As a follower of Jesus, I believe that I cannot even connect with the divine without engaging with and advocating for the marginalized and oppressed.

In the Gospels of Matthew (22:35-40), Mark (12:28-34) & Luke (10:27), Jesus told us to love God and love our neighbors. The message of Jesus is simple. The spiritual and practical are always connected. As a follower of Jesus, I cannot claim God unless I am willing to claim the plight of my neighbor.

While I could continue with an exposition of the entire New Testament based on my convictions, these collected verses are sufficient to illustrate that my religious/spiritual beliefs cannot be separated from my advocacy. They are one in the same.

By being both a spiritual presence and a public advocate, I have lived out my beliefs in my work with Scott Eizember. Now, even though I have agreed in writing to all of the Oklahoma Department of Correction's policies and procedures under threat of great penalty if I don't follow through, I am being denied the opportunity to see my work with Eizember to its' logical conclusion, helping my brother peacefully transition from this life to the next by being a comfort and spiritual guide for him in the execution chamber.